

P354

which have cost some \$40,000,000, and the trifling income from which will doubtless have to be sacrificed to offset the abolition of the Erie tolls.

Thoughtful persons contrast the experience of Canada with that of the United States in the matter of national responsibilities, and thence draw conclusions highly favorable to the latter. The reduction of the American debt, now \$1,392,245,450, by over \$800,000,000 since the close of the Civil War, the year just expired witnessing the extinction of \$162,289,150 of the total, is a feat unparalleled in history, notwithstanding the doubt that many reasonably entertain as to the wisdom of subjecting the present generation to such a strain. Such an achievement, however, has proved an impressive advertisement of the resources of the Republic abroad, if it has oppressed to some extent the masses at home.

There can be no denying the fact that one of the results of the late Civil War was the postponement of the closer union of Canada and the United States. The enormous war debt has also been held up, *in terrorem*, before Canadian eyes to excite contentment with their situation and aversion to "Yankee connection." But events are too strong, and nothing can arrest the tide of popular opinion, which ceaselessly, though calmly, flows in the direction of closer connection, if not political union, with the republic. A great many straws might be pointed to at this time, to show how the wind blows; but I need only indicate one or two: On the 13th of December last, the Corn Exchange of Montreal, numbering several hundred merchants, petitioned the Federal Government in favor of the abolition of canal tolls, and the obtainment of a new reciprocity treaty with the United States.

Nobody in his senses is ignorant of the fact that even reciprocity would lead to a material increase of Canadian trade with the United States, and that such would be beneficial to both nations; but who could set bounds to the mutual advantages of a commercial or, better still, a political union? The fructifying influences of that wondrous American enterprise, supported by illimitable capital, would soon vigorously develop the great resources of Canada. Her vast solitudes of forest and prairie, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the southern boundary to the most northerly line of profitable cultivation, would be converted into the comfortable homes of prosperous millions. Under all